

PROSPECT: OR, VIEW OF THE MORAL WORLD.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 9, 1805.

NO. 6.

COMMENTS UPON THE SACRED WRITINGS OF THE JEWS AND CHRISTIANS.

BOOK OF LEVITICUS.

JUSTICE is the first great and important principle of social existence. It appertaineth to all intelligent beings, and ought to form, in a pre-eminent degree, the distinguishing characteristic of their nature. A state of injustice, is a state of predatory warfare; it is a state where all the rancorous passions are let loose, and where discord forms the hell of social life. Without justice, man is but a brutal savage—the enemy of his species; and all his actions are hostile to the common and best interests of the whole community. If justice be a necessary attribute in the character of a human being, it must be still more so in regard to the character of the supreme God. A book which licenses injustice, when written by man, we should call a false book; how much more forcibly will this idea apply, when God is said to be the writer or dictator of a book, and this book is found to contain commands of the most barefaced injustice! Such, however, is the fact in regard to the Bible, as we shall prove from the 25th chapter of Leviticus. No wonder that Christians, or believers in revelation, should hold, without a blush, millions of their fellow-creatures in a state of slavery; for the Jewish God has here sanctioned the nefarious practice, by his own commands! “Both thy bond-men and thy bond-maids, which thou shalt have, shall be of the heathen that are round about you; of them shall ye buy bond-men and bond-maids. Moreover, of the children of the strangers that do sojourn among you, of them shall you buy, and of their families, that are with you, which they begat in your land; and they shall be your possession: And ye shall take them as an inheritance for your children after you, to inherit them for a possession; they shall be your bond-men forever: but over your brethren, the children of Israel, ye shall not rule one over another with rigour.” Reason and justice, and the American constitutions, in conformity to these principles, have declared that all men are born free and equal. This great moral axiom—this doctrine, which forms the only consolation in regard to the future destiny of individuals and of nations, is here contradicted by a book which claims divine origin, and pretends to be the word of God. Is, then, the word of God at variance with the voice of reason? Does it oppose the principles of immortal justice, and give celestial sanction to the abominable custom of slavery? Yes, such is the character of this *holy religion*; such are the doctrines which revelation inculcates. This single passage is of itself sufficient to stamp on the book the mark of infamy, and hold it up to the derision of the free citizens of all countries. Men who think society ought to be governed by principle, and that this principle should include justice and utility, ought instantly to abandon, at least in theory, the idea of unconditional servitude; they ought to place a sentiment

of condemnation upon any book where the doctrine of slavery is inculcated ; they ought to perceive that all national distinctions serve only to generate national hostility, and destroy that sentiment of universal philanthropy, so necessary to be cherished, for the general happiness of the world. When I am instructed to love my own family, and hate that of my neighbour, I am placed in a predicament which circumscribes the useful and benevolent affections of my nature, and I become a creature of instinct, instead of exalted reason. When I am told that I should love the spot of earth on which I was born, in preference to any other part of the globe, I ought to perceive in this kind of instruction the imbecility of ignorance, and the tenacity of narrow prejudice. When I am told that my own nation is superior to all others in science, virtue, and happiness, I ought suspect the correctness of the observation, and compel my mind to take a comprehensive view of opposite evidence. Above all, when I am told that one nation has a right to enslave another, I ought not to hesitate a single moment to denounce this as a damnable political heresy, and to return, with hasty steps, to the solid ground of reason, and the permanent rights of human existence. Turn, reader, for a single moment, to this passage in Leviticus ; the Jews were not permitted to enslave or treat with rigour their own people ; but they might buy, sell, and enslave surrounding nations, with the greatest impunity, and under divine protection. Oh, God ! if this be a decree of thine, then we may truly say, that *God's ways are not like our ways, nor his thoughts like our thoughts*, but that one system of tyrannical dominion hath, by divine command, covered the whole earth, and produced universal ignorance, wretchedness, and misery.

DEATH.

WHOMEVER contemplates most thoroughly the laws and principles of the physical world, will be least susceptible of terrific apprehensions at the idea of corporeal dissolution. Organic structure is one of the great laws of nature ; and disorganization, its counterpart, equally powerful, and equally universal. It is astonishing that so many incontrovertible facts, as the material world presents to the mind of man, should not have made a deeper impression, and produced a more philosophic effect ! This astonishment will be diminished, when it is considered that the human mind, for thousands of years, has been employed about nothing, or in other words, has been occupied with the laborious study of nonentities. How many long winter evenings have been spent by whole families, in talking about a haunted house, or a woman bewitched, or the doctrine of trances, or the ominous fatality of dreams ; while on the contrary, all this lost time might have been employed in pleasant conversation, and the improvement of the mind, instead of manufacturing ghosts and witches, and in the examination of the powers, substance, and destiny of man. This would have given him a comprehensive view of his true predicament in nature, and would have fortified his understanding against the evils and accidents that have awaited him. Death is only the commencement of a new mode of existence, and sound philosophy teaches us that it is something worse than folly to be everlastingly in dread of that which

is a primary law of our nature, and from the strokes of which no human wisdom can devise an escape. Let man learn wisdom, by viewing with tranquillity, the destiny to which he is devoted ; let all his actions tend to the diminution of evil, and the augmentation of good.

MANNER OF CONDUCTING RELIGIOUS WORSHIP, IN THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE.

From D'Ohsson's General History.

“ THERE is the utmost simplicity in this public service, both with regard to the interior appearance of the mosques, and to the dress of the Imams and the other ministers of religion, who never wear any sacerdotal habit ; yet nothing can be more awful and august than this ceremony, performed with the most silent and profound attention.

“ Notwithstanding the simplicity of all their temples, they do not fail, particularly the imperial mosques, by their immense extent and high vaulted roofs, to excite admiration. The generality of them are adorned with splendid columns of porphyry, of green antique, or of marble. The decorations consist only of small silver lamps, and of small lustres elegantly worked, surrounded by still smaller lamps, and ostriches' eggs, on which passages from the Courann are inscribed in letters of gold. Some of these mosques, particularly that of Sultan Ahmed, have also golden lamps enriched with jewels. The walls are in general ornamented only with inscriptions in large golden letters ; such as the name of God, Allah, those of the Prophet, of the four first Kaliphs, and of the Imans Hassan and Husseins, sons of Ally. They exhibit no image, figure, or representation whatever, neither in painting or sculpture ; the law is in this respect extremely rigorous.

“ Three principal objects, if we may use the expression, may be said to characterize all the Mahometan temples ; 1, the altar, Mihhrab, which is a concavity or niche of six or eight feet high, cut out the wall, at the edifice, and which serves no other purpose than to shew the geographical situation of Mecca ; 2, the gallery of the Muezzinns, Mahhsil-Muezzinns, always on the left of the altar ; 3, the pulpit, Kuesy, of the Scheykhs who preach ; it is elevated by two or three steps on the right of the altar. In the principal mosques, where preaching, Khouthbe is allowed at the solemn service on Fridays, and on the two feaste of Beyram, there is a second pulpit, called Minuber, entirely consecrated to the minister Khatib, who discharges that important function. This pulpit, of fifteen, twenty, or twenty-three steps, in proportion to the height of each mosque, is placed at a certain distance from the altar, always on the left hand. The imperial mosques, and those which the Sultan sometimes honours with his presence, are also decorated with a gallery, Mahhsil-Padischahy, destined for his reception, and for that of the Khassodalys, or gentlemen of the bed-chamber. It has gilt grated windows, and is placed on the right of the altar, opposite the pulpit of the Khatibs.

“ In the day, the service is performed without tapers or flambeaux ; and at the first, fourth, and fifth Námazs, they light only a part of the small lamps suspended from the ceiling, and the tapers placed near the altar. Of these there is in general only two, one on the right, the

other on the left of the Mihrab : they have been given by the founders of the mosques. Pious Mussulmen are, however, permitted to increase their number by donations, equally perpetual. Thus some mosques have four, six, eight, ten, &c.—they are always placed by the side of the two first, in a right line, along the wall; the number of them, however, never exceeds eighteen, nine on each side of the altar. In case of additional donations, the Caiym-Baschy of the mosque, instead of increasing the number, causes new ones of a larger size to be made, composed of these and the former, in the form of flambeaux. The candlesticks are generally of copper, a very few of the mosques have them of silver: that of St. Sophia has two of massy gold; a sad monument of the spoils of Hungary, when Buda, its capital, fell into the hands of Soleyman I. such is at least the opinion of the people, and the ministers who performed service in that mosque.

“ In all the Mahometan temples there are neither benches nor chairs: the use of these would be incompatible both with the manners of the people, and with the nature of their worship, which consists in inclinations and prostrations. The great and the small, all are seated without distinction, on the carpets or mats with which the mosques are furnished at all seasons of the year; thus no one ever enters without leaving his outermost slippers at the door, both in summer and winter. The 19th and the 25th plates, which represented St. Sophia and Sultan Ahmed, will afford an exact idea of the inside of these mosques. As to the political and historical account of these temples, their rank, their prerogatives, their revenues, &c. these circumstances will be discussed hereafter, in the chapter which mentions their being built.

“ In the public service, the officiating Iman always faces the altar, and stands before the rest of the assembly; the people are ranged behind him in parallel lines, from the altar to the door of the temple. No one ever begins a new line, till the vacancies of the preceding are entirely full; in this mode of arrangement are the Namazs performed in public. Their various movements, which are made with astonishing regularity and precision, present a most striking spectacle. The Iman alone recites the prayers aloud; he and the Muezzinns are the only persons allowed to chaunt. Of the fourteen prosodies which they have for spiritual harmony, seven are reprobated as profane; the others are used by the ministers of religion; but the most esteemed, and most generally adopted, is that which bears the name of Assim. The people repeat in a low voice what the Iman chaunts, and hear in silence the different chapters of the Courann which are recited by him. The Amen only, Aminn, may be articulated aloud. This Namaz, as has been already observed, constitutes the whole religious ceremony of the Mahometans; it is uniform, general, universal, at all the canonical hours, in all the mosques, and throughout the whole course of the year; there is no difference, except with regard to the number of rik'aths prescribed for the canonical hours, and to the recitation of the chapters of the Courann, which are always at the choice of each Iman at public prayers, and of every individual in his private worship.

“ As in the assembly of the men the law allows only women of a certain age, they are seldom seen in the mosques; private galleries are, however, set apart for them; they are furnished with grated windows, and are elevated at the entrance of the temple, above the prin-

cipal door ; the women, who are here placed, form, according to the spirit of the law, the last rows of the assembly. They never assemble together in a body to say their Namaz, either at the mosques or elsewhere. There are neither convents, monasteries, nor religious societies for the female sex ; whatever be their state and condition, they almost universally say their Namaz in private.

“ But the men, as has been already mentioned, are allowed to say it either in public or private ; many of the nobles and public officers, when they are unable to attend the mosques, pray publicly with the servants of their household. If they perform this duty in the offices where they transact public business, all the persons who are there employed, all they who may accidentally be present, join in this pious ceremony. Hence in the public hotels, and in houses of distinction, they keep private Imams and Muezzins, by the title of chaplains or almoners. These Muezzins announce the Ezann on the top of the stair-case, or near the door of the room where they meet to pray.—They afterwards place themselves in one of the rows of the assembly, where they recite the second summons, Akameth ; after which the Imam, placed as in the mosques before the congregation, begins the Namaz. These private ministers are different from those public ones which officiate in mosques. They are merely citizens, appointed by the heads of families under whose name and authority they preside over this religious service, as having themselves the privilege of discharging in their own houses the sacred office of Imam in these private assemblies ; and it is at the choice of this transient Imam, whether he who officiates be possessed of those virtuous qualities which the law requires in those who assume that hallowed character.

“ Except in cases of lawful impediments, they seldom omit the daily Namazes in public, either at the mosques, or elsewhere. The really pious, and those who find it their interest to appear so, never omit this service. The Sultans themselves very frequently join in this ceremony with the gentlemen of the bed-chamber, in a chapel of the Seraglio. They who omit this ceremony, dread the censures of the lawyers, the most rigorous of whom loudly accuse those who say their Namaz in private, but particularly persons of rank and dignity, as being more especially required to set an example to the rest of the nation.

“ Bayezid I. devoted to wine and debauchery, neglected the public prayers. We are informed by Sad'ed-dinn Efendy, that this monarch had a dispute with the principal Oulemas of his court, respecting a cause which interested one of the officers of the palace. It was necessary to produce a second witness to prove judicially the object of the procedure. Bayezid, who was acquainted with it, told the Mollas, that he knew accurately the circumstance, and would bear testimony to the truth : “ We can only believe your word,” replied one of these magistrates, Fernarizade Shems'udein Efendy, Cady of Brousse, then the capital of the Empire ; “ but the evidence of your majesty is not admissible in any judicial question.”

On Bayezid's expressing the greatest surprise, the Cady very respectfully explained to him, that the law did not allow a Mussulman to be a witness, unless he had been faithful to his religion, and attentive to fulfil all the duties of external worship, “ Thus as your Majes-

ay," added he, "does not join in the five daily Namazs in common with the faithful, your testimony is not admissible." These words made a deep impression on the mind of the Sultan: from that day he determined to be rigorously attentive to this public form of prayer; he commanded even a mosque to be constructed near his palace, where he afterwards attended regularly every day, says the same author, to discharge publicly the first duty of Islamism."

ADDISON (JOSEPH) son of Dr. Addison, mentioned in the last article, was born May 1, 1672, at Milston, near Ambresbury, Wiltshire, where his father was rector. He received the first rudiments of his education at the place of his nativity, under the reverend Mr. Naish; but was removed to Salisbury, under the care of Mr. Taylor; and soon after to the Charter-house, where he studied under Dr. Ellis, and contracted that intimacy with Sir Richard Steele, which their joint labours have so effectually recorded. In 1687 he was entered of Queen's College, Oxford, where, in 1689, the accidental perusal of some Latin verses gained him the patronage of Dr. Lancaster, by whose recommendation he was elected into Magdalen College as Demy. Here he took the degree of M. A. Feb. 14, 1693; continued to cultivate poetry and criticism, and grew first eminent by his Latin compositions, which are entitled to particular praise. In 1695 he wrote a poem to King William, with a kind of rhyming introduction addressed to lord Somers. In 1697, he wrote his poem on the peace of Ryswick, which he dedicated to Montague, and was afterwards called by Smith "the best Latin poem since the *Æneid*." Having yet no public employment, he obtained in 1699 a pension of 300l. a-year, that he might be enabled to travel. While he was travelling at leisure in Italy, he was far from being idle; for he not only collected his observations on the country, but found time to write his *Dialogues on Medals*. Here also he wrote the letter to Lord Halifax, which is justly considered as the most elegant, if not the most sublime, of his poetical productions. At his return he published his travels, with a dedication to Lord Somers. This book, though awhile neglected, is said in time to have become so much the favourite of the public, that before it was reprinted it rose to five times its price. The victory at Blenheim, 1704, spread triumph and confidence over the nation; and Lord Godolphin lamenting to Lord Halifax that it had not been celebrated in a manner equal to the subject, desired him to propose it to some better poet. Halifax named Addison; who, having undertaken the work, communicated it to the Treasurer, while it was yet advanced no further than the simile of the Angel, and was immediately rewarded by succeeding Mr. Locke in the place of Commissioner of Appeals. In the following year he was at Hanover with Lord Halifax; and the year after was made under-secretary of state. When the Marquis of Wharton was appointed Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Addison attended him as his secretary; and was made keeper of the records in Birmingham's Tower, with a salary of 300l. a year. When he was in office, he made a law to himself, as Swift has recorded, never to remit his regular fees in civility to his friends. "I may have a hundred friends; and if my fee be two guineas, I shall by relinquishing my right lose 200 guineas, and no friend

gain more than two." He was in Ireland when Steele, without any communication of his design, began the publication of the Tatler; but he was not long concealed: by inserting a remark on Virgil, which Addison had given him, he discovered himself. Steele's first Tatler was published April 22, 1709, and Addison's contribution appeared May 26.—To the Tatler, in about two months, succeeded the Spectator; a series of essays of the same kind, but written with less levity, and upon a more regular plan, and published daily.—The next year, 1713, in which Cato came upon the stage, was the grand climacterick of Addison's reputation. The whole nation was at that time on fire with faction. The Whigs applauded every line in which liberty was mentioned, as a satire on the Tories; and the Tories echoed every clap, to shew that the satire was unfelt. While Cato was upon the stage, another daily paper called the Guardian was published by Steele; to which Addison gave great assistance. The papers of Addison are marked in the Spectator by one of the letters in the name of Clio, and in the Guardian by a Hand. It was not known that Addison had tried a comedy on the stage, till Steele, after his death, declared him the author of "The Drummer;" this play Steele carried to the theatre, and afterwards to the press, and sold the copy for fifty guineas. In the midst of these agreeable employments Mr. Addison was not an indifferent spectator of public affairs. He wrote, as different exigencies required, in 1707, "The present state of the War, &c. The Whig Examiner, and the Trial of Count Tariff;" all which tracts, being on temporary topics, expired with the subjects which gave them birth.—When the House of Hanover took possession of the throne, it was reasonable to expect that the zeal of Addison would be suitably rewarded. Before the arrival of king George he was made secretary to the regency, and was required by his office to send notice to Hanover that the Queen was dead, and that the throne was vacant. To do this would not have been difficult to any man but Addison, who was so overwhelmed with the greatness of the event, and so distracted by the choice of expression, that the Lords, who could not wait for the niceties of criticism, called Mr. Southwell, a clerk in the house, and ordered him to dispatch the message. Southwell readily told what was necessary, in the common style of business, and valued himself upon having done what was too hard for Addison. He was better qualified for the Freeholder, a paper which he published twice a week from Dec. 23, 1715, to the middle of the next year. This was undertaken in defence of the established government, sometimes with argument, sometimes with mirth. In argument he had many equals; but his humour was singular and matchless.—On the 2d of August, 1716, he married the countess dowager of Warwick, whom he is said to have first known by becoming tutor to her son. This marriage however made no addition to his happiness; it neither found them nor made them equal. She always remembered her own rank, and thought herself entitled to treat with very little ceremony the tutor of her son. The year after, 1717, he rose to his highest elevation, being made secretary of state: but it is universally confessed that he was unequal to the duties of his place. In the house of commons he could not speak, and therefore was useless to the defence of the government. In the office he could not issue an order without losing his time in quest of fine expressions. What he

gained in rank, he lost in credit ; and, finding by experience his own inability, was forced to solicit his dismission, with a pension of 1500l. a year. His friends palliated this relinquishment, of which both friends and enemies knew the true reason, with an account of declining health, and the necessity of recess and quiet. He now engaged in a laudable and excellent work, viz. a Defence of the Christian Religion, of which part was published after his death.—Addison had for some time been oppressed by shortness of breath, which was now aggravated by a dropsy : and, finding his danger pressing, he prepared to die conformably to his own precepts and professions.—Lord Warwick was a young man of very irregular life, and perhaps of loose opinions. Addison, for whom he did not want respect, had very diligently endeavoured to reclaim him ; but his arguments and expostulations had no effect ; one experiment, however, remained to be tried. When he found his life near its end, he directed the young lord to be called ; and when he desired, with great tenderness, to hear his last injunctions, told him, "I have sent for you to see how a Christian can die." What effect this awful scene had on the earl's behaviour is not known : he died himself in a short time. Having given directions to Mr. Tickell for the publication of his works, and dedicated them on his death-bed to his friend Mr. Craggs, he died June 16, 1719, at Holland-house, leaving no child but a daughter, who was living in 1783.

ABSTEMIUS (LAURENTIUS) an Italian writer, born at Macerata, in La Marca de Ancona, devoted himself early to the study of polite literature. He published, under the pontificate of Alexander VI. a treatise, entitled "Hecatomythium," from its containing 100 fables, which have been often printed with those Æsop, Phædrus, Gabrius, Avienus, &c. He has these ancient mythologists generally in view, but does not always strictly follow their manner : sometimes intermixing his fable with a merry story, and now and then somewhat satirical upon the clergy. His 104th fable of "The Talents Multiplied," is a proof of this. A priest, as we are there told, was ordered by his bishop to superintend a monastery, where there were 5 nuns, by each of whom he had a son before the year was out. The bishop, hearing of this, was highly enraged ; and, sending for the priest, reprimanded him severely, calling him a perfidious sacrilegious villain, for having thus defiled the temples of the Holy Ghost. "Lord (said the priest!) thou deliveredst unto me 5 talents ; behold I have gained, besides them, 5 talents more." The prelate was so taken with this facetious answer, that he gave the priest plenary absolution.

NEW-YORK:

Published every Saturday, by ELIHU PALMER, No. 26, Chatham-Street....Price Two Dollars a-year, paid in advance.